

# SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress  
1st Session

Vote No. 157

June 27, 1997, 3:16 pm  
Page S-6692 Temp. Record

## TAXPAYER RELIEF ACT/Amtrak Trust Fund

**SUBJECT:** Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 . . . S. 949. Roth motion to waive the Budget Act for the consideration of the language of section 702 in this bill and in any conference report in which it may be included.

### ACTION: MOTION AGREED TO, 77-21

**SYNOPSIS:** As reported, S. 949, the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, will provide net tax relief of \$76.8 billion over 5 years and \$238 billion over 10 years. The cost will be more than offset by the economic dividend (\$355 billion over 10 years) that will result from balancing the budget in fiscal year (FY) 2002. This bill will enact the largest tax cut since 1981 and the first tax cut since 1986. It will give cradle-to-grave tax relief to Americans: it will give a \$500-per-child tax credit, education tax relief, savings and investment tax relief, retirement tax relief, and estate tax relief. Over the first 5 years, approximately three-fourths of the benefits will go to Americans earning \$75,000 or less. It will eliminate a third of the increased tax burden imposed by the 1993 Clinton tax hike, which was the largest tax hike in history.

**Section 702** will establish an intercity Passenger Rail Fund. The fund will be financed by dedicating to it amounts equal to the amounts raised by .5 cent per gallon of the excise taxes imposed on the transportation fuels after September 30, 1997, and before April 16, 2001. Funds will be distributed among the States. States with Amtrak passenger rail service will use funds for that service; other States will use funds for other intercity rail or bus services or to purchase Amtrak services.

Senator McCain raised the point of order that section 702 violated section 313(b)(1) of the Budget Act. All debate time had expired, but by unanimous consent some debate was permitted. Following debate, Senator Roth moved to waive the Budget Act for the consideration of the language of section 702 in this bill and in any conference report in which it may be included. Generally, those favoring the motion to waive favored the section; those opposing the motion to waive opposed the section.

NOTE: A three-fifths majority (60) vote is required to waive the Budget Act.

**Those favoring** the motion to waive contended:

Section 702 will not affect the amount of tax relief that this bill will provide as our colleagues claim. It is totally revenue-neutral.

(See other side)

YEAS (77)				NAYS (21)		NOT VOTING (2)	
Republican (35 or 64%)		Democrats (42 or 98%)		Republicans (20 or 36%)	Democrats (1 or 2%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (2)
Bennett	Inhofe	Akaka	Kennedy	Abraham	Glenn		Hollings- <sup>2</sup>
Burns	Jeffords	Baucus	Kerrey	Allard			Inouye- <sup>2</sup>
Campbell	Lott	Biden	Kerry	Ashcroft			
Chafee	Lugar	Bingaman	Kohl	Bond			
Coats	Mack	Boxer	Landrieu	Brownback			
Cochran	McConnell	Breaux	Lautenberg	Coverdell			
Collins	Murkowski	Bryan	Leahy	Craig			
D'Amato	Nickles	Bumpers	Levin	Frist			
DeWine	Roberts	Byrd	Lieberman	Gorton			
Domenici	Roth	Cleland	Mikulski	Gramm			
Enzi	Santorum	Conrad	Moseley-Braun	Grams			
Faircloth	Smith, Gordon	Daschle	Moynihan	Gregg			
Grassley	Snowe	Dodd	Murray	Kempthorne			
Hagel	Specter	Dorgan	Reed	Kyl			
Hatch	Stevens	Durbin	Reid	McCain			
Helms	Thomas	Feingold	Robb	Sessions			
Hutchinson	Thurmond	Feinstein	Rockefeller	Shelby			
Hutchison		Ford	Sarbanes	Smith, Bob			
		Graham	Torricelli	Thompson			
		Harkin	Wellstone	Warner			
		Johnson	Wyden				

#### EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business  
2—Necessarily Absent  
3—Illness  
4—Other

#### SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea  
AN—Announced Nay  
PY—Paired Yea  
PN—Paired Nay

All it will do is transfer a portion of the fuel taxes that are collected for existing transportation trust funds to a new trust fund for Amtrak. If this action is not taken, the General Accounting Office informs us that Amtrak will go bankrupt in 1998. If it goes bankrupt, all of the people who currently ride on its passenger trains will instead clog highways and airports. It would take an additional 7,500 fully booked 757's or hundreds of thousands of cars just to handle the additional traffic each year between Washington, DC, and New York. Our traffic arteries are not large enough to handle that increased traffic. Amtrak is 84-percent self-sufficient, which is better than any other passenger rail system that we know of in the world. Our colleagues do not like the fact that it is not entirely self-sufficient, but they need to ask themselves if the alternative, imposing gridlock, especially up and down the eastern seaboard, is worth the cost of ending the subsidy and allowing Amtrak to fail. Clearly it is not. The point of order against this section should be waived.

**Those opposing** the motion to waive contended:

Section 702 will take \$2.3 billion out of the tax relief promised to the American people and will place it into a trust fund to further subsidize Amtrak. These funds will be appropriated outside of the existing budget caps, ensuring that Amtrak will not have to compete with other transportation priorities such as highways and aviation. We oppose cutting tax relief, and we oppose subsidizing rail services, so we oppose section 702.